



Medical Ethics in Human Subjects Research:

Nazi Physicians – War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity

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Guidelines for Human Experimentation

(1931)

Reichsgesundheitsamt, Weimar Republic, Germany

PRINCIPLES

- **Appropriate Justification/Need**
- **Balance risks and potential benefits**
- **Use extreme caution if microorganisms are involved**
- **Protect vulnerable subjects**
- **Obtain informed consent**

Guidelines for Human Experimentation (1931)

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- **Appropriate Justification/Need**

- Conduct animal experiments before human experiments
- Avoid human experiments if other means of collecting data are still available.

- **Balance risks and potential benefits**

- **Use extreme caution if microorganisms are involved.**

Guidelines for Human Experimentation (1931)

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- **Protect vulnerable subjects:**

- Caution should be taken for subjects < 18 years old.
- Poor or socially disadvantaged subjects should not be exploited.

- **Obtain informed consent:**

- Full, unambiguous, and informed consent from test subjects is required, except in extreme extenuating circumstances.

Nuremberg Doctors' Trial



Nuremberg Doctors' Trial (USA v. Karl Brandt, et al.)

- First of 12 trials for war crimes of German doctors that United States authorities held in the occupation zone in Nuremberg, Germany, after World War II.
- 20 of 23 defendants were medical doctors; 3 were administrators
- Accused of having been involved in horrific human experimentation and mass murder.

Indictment

War crimes:

- Performing horrific and inhuman medical experiments, without the subjects' consent, on prisoners of war and civilians of occupied countries
- Planning and performing the mass murder of prisoners of war and civilians of occupied countries.

Crimes against humanity:

- Committing crimes [described above] also on German nationals (Jews).

Indictment

War crimes:

- Performing horrific and inhuman medical experiments, without the subjects' consent, on prisoners of war and civilians of occupied countries
- Planning and performing the mass murder of prisoners of war and civilians of occupied countries.

Crimes against humanity:

- Committing crimes [described above] also on German nationals (Jews).

Indictment

War crimes:

- Performing medical experiments, without the subjects' consent, [**NON-CONSENSUAL**]
- on prisoners of war and civilians of occupied countries, [**VULNERABLE SUBJECTS**]
- in the course of which experiments the defendants [Nazi doctors] committed murders, brutalities, cruelties, tortures, atrocities, and other inhuman acts. [**MALEFICENCE**]

Crimes against humanity:

- Committing crimes [described above] also on German nationals (Jews). [**SAME AS ABOVE**]

**Most
victims
were:**

Jews

Poles

Russians

Roma (Gypsies)

Types of experiments

**Survival of military
personnel**

**Testing drugs and
treatments**

**Advance/promote Nazi
racial and ideological
goals**

Survival of captured military personnel

High-altitude
experiments

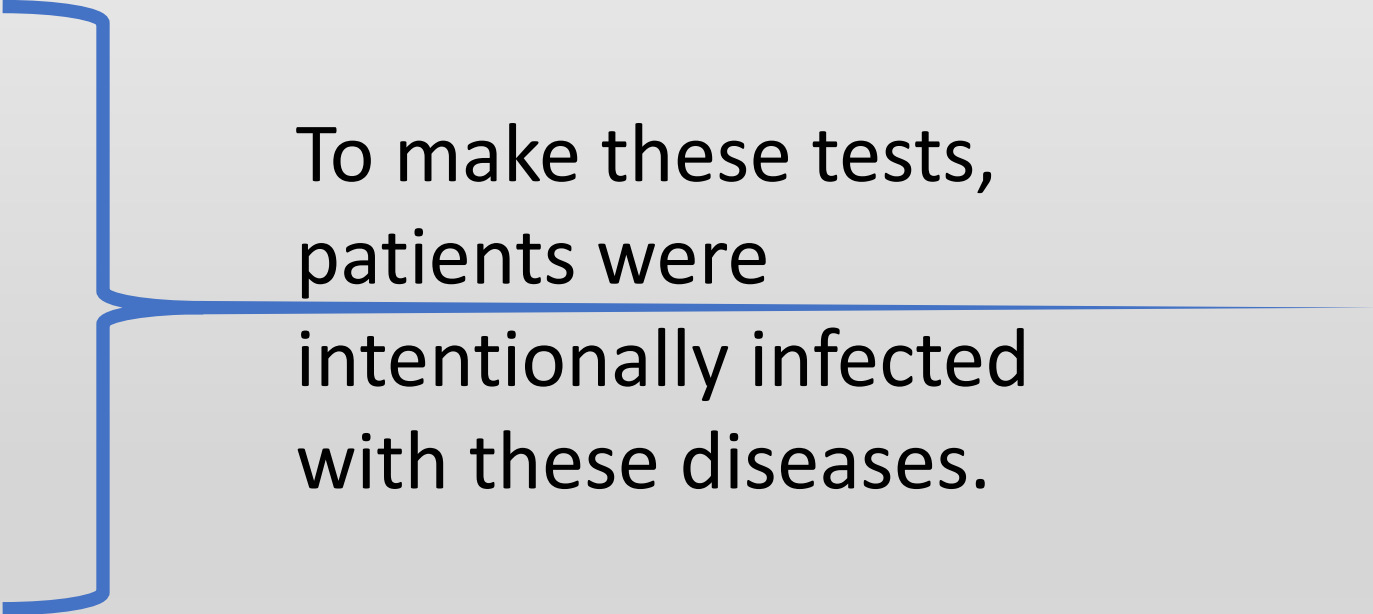
Freezing experiments

Test methods of making
seawater drinkable

Testing drugs and treatments on concentration camp prisoners

- Testing immunization compounds and antibodies for the prevention and treatment of contagious diseases:

- Malaria
- Typhus
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid fever
- Yellow fever
- Infectious hepatitis

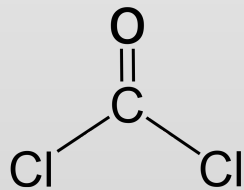


To make these tests, patients were intentionally infected with these diseases.

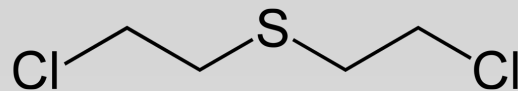
Testing drugs and treatments on concentration camp prisoners

- Experiments in bone-grafting
- Exposure to lethal gases to test possible antidotes.:

- Phosgene



- Mustard gas



**Soldier with
moderate
mustard-agent
burns sustained
during WWI**

**(showing
characteristic
bullae)**

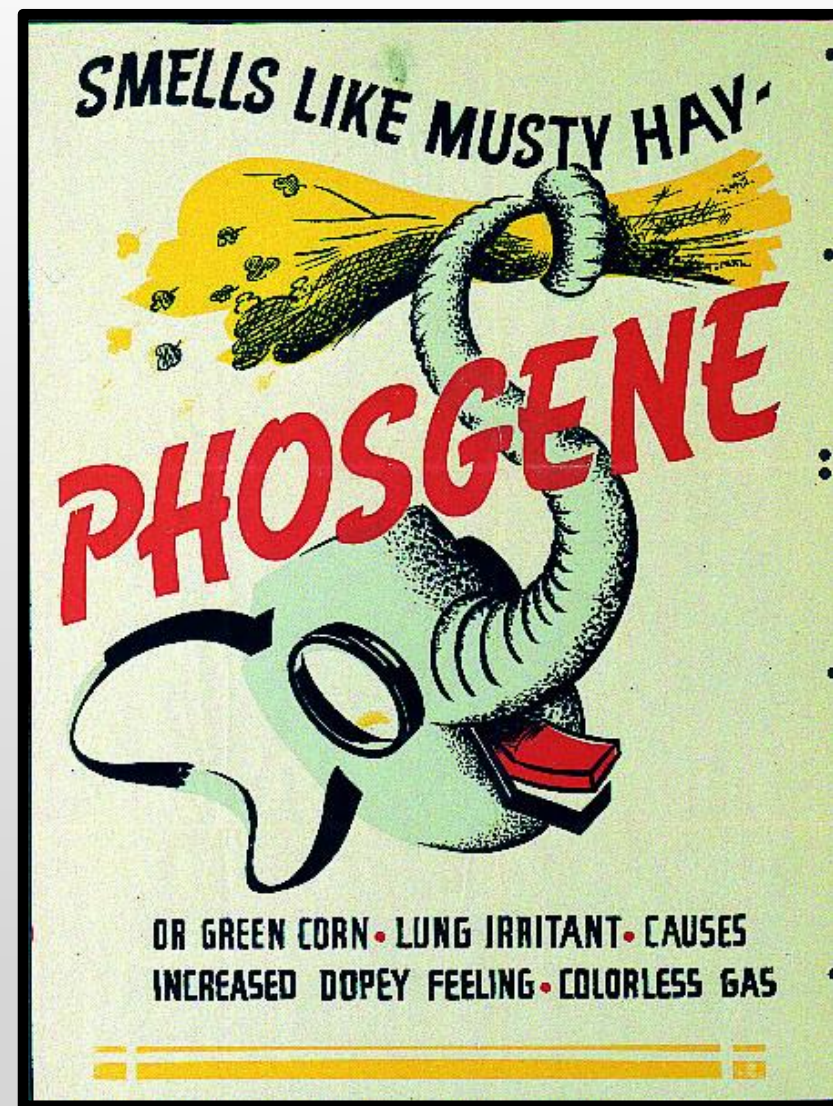
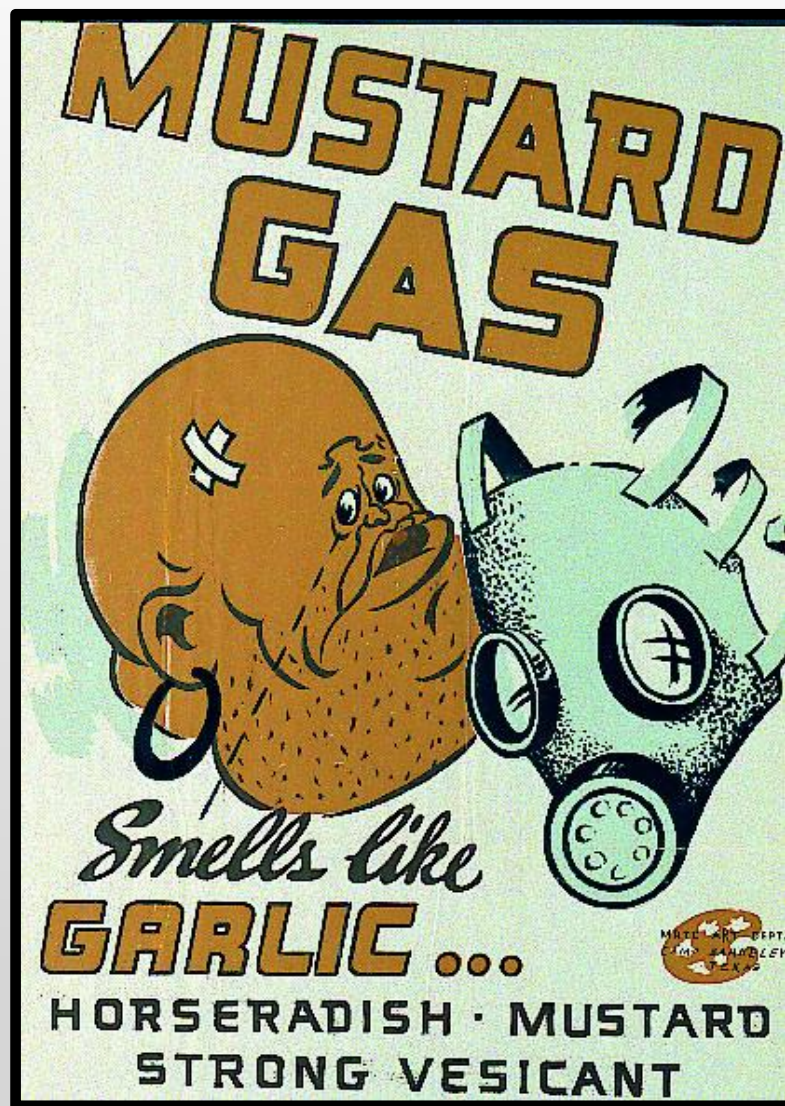


Blister agent burns



US Army Posters

WWII
(1941-1945)



Nazi physician Josef Mengele

(1911-1979)



Advance/promote Nazi racial & ideological goals – Josef Mengele

- Tried to devise methods to eradicate “inferior” genes from the human population to create Hitler’s “perfect race.”
- Attempted to demonstrate “degeneration” of Jewish and “Gypsy” blood by harvesting tissue samples & body parts.
- Many “test subjects” died as a result of the experiments or were murdered to facilitate post-mortem examination.

Mengele's "medical" experiments using twins

- Agonizing and often lethal experiments with Jewish and Roma (Gypsy) twins.
- Most were children, as young as 5 years of age.
- Many twins had limbs and organs removed in macabre surgical procedures, performed without an anesthetic (stitched twins together, sex-change operations, removal of organs and limbs, castration or sterilization, injected chemicals into eyes to change their eye color).
- After an experiment, subjects were usually murdered and their bodies dissected.

Jewish twins kept alive temporarily to be used in Mengele's medical experiments.



These children were liberated from Auschwitz by the Soviet Red Army in January 1945.

**Captain Alexander
Vorontsov
фотограф
Александр
Воронцов**

In January 1945,
photographer Alexander
Vorontsov of the Soviet
Red Army documented the
liberation of the death
camp at Auschwitz.



A black and white historical photograph showing a group of children in a camp, likely Auschwitz. The children are standing in a line, some looking towards the camera. The background shows a simple structure, possibly a barracks or a fence. The text "Auschwitz Kinderlager Liberation" is overlaid in large, white, bold letters across the center of the image.

**Auschwitz
Kinderlager
Liberation**

Nazi “Medical” Experiments & Hippocratic Oath

Beneficence [Do good: Act for the welfare of the patient] - **HeT**

- I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment - **HeT**
- Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick - **HeT**

Nazi “Medical” Experiments & Hippocratic Oath

Non-Maleficence [Do no intentional harm] - **HeT**

- I will never use treatment with a view to injury and wrong-doing. - **HeT**
- Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. - **HeT**
- I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm, especially from abusing the bodies of man or woman, bond or free. - **HeT**

Спасибо